

REMARKS

Claims 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, and 31 are now present in this application.

An abstract has again been presented, claims 16, 20, 25 and 29 have been amended, and claims 19, 24, 28 and 32 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has again requested an abstract on a separate sheet. The prior amendment of March 24, 2004 presented such an Abstract. This abstract can be found in the image file wrapper in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's online Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system, as the last page of "Applicant Arguments or Remarks Made in an Amendment". Nonetheless, a copy of the Abstract as submitted on March 24, 2004 from PAIR is included herewith. Withdrawal of any objection to the specification is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 16, 18, 20-23, 25-27 and 29-32 (sic) are rejected under 35 USC 102(b). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is noted that no mention has been made of claim 17 on page 2 of the Office Action. Also, it is noted that, on page 2 of the Office Action, claim 32 is both indicated as containing allowable subject matter and rejected. It is believed that the inclusion of claim 32 in the 35 USC 102(b) rejection is merely a typographical

error. This claim 32 has similar limitations to the other objected-to claims.

In particular, claims 19, 24, 28 and 32 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Because these claims have now been incorporated into their respective independent claims, it is respectfully submitted that the 35 USC 102(b) rejection should now be overcome. Favorable reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

In the event the Examiner does not consider this application to be in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered for the purposes of Appeal. This Amendment should overcome the current grounds of rejection and therefore simplify the issues for Appeal. Nonetheless, it should be unnecessary to proceed to Appeal because the instant application should now be in condition for allowance.

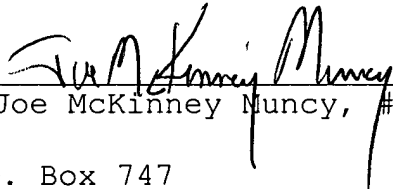
In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicants respectfully petition for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application and the required fee of \$510.00 is attached herewith.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
Joe McKinney Muncy, #32,334

KM/asc
4391-0102P

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

Attachment: Abstract of the Disclosure